



How to Fall Asleep Fast For Kids

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Trying to get your children to go to bed can be an ordeal, especially if they are not tired. Just like an adult, everyone needs a sleep routine to condition the

mind and body that it is bedtime. Recommended hours a child needs to sleep may vary depending on the child, but the sleep researchers have determined an infant 9 months and younger should get 14-16 hours of sleep a day, 9 months to two years 13-14 hours and 2 - 3 years 12-13 hours. If your 9 month old took a three hour nap in the afternoon, they should sleep up to 11 hours during the night. If your child is coming up short, let's look at some factors and determine how to fall asleep fast for kids.

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Food: Does your child want a snack after dinner hours? Is this snack eaten during his bedtime routine? Does your child use the excuse of wanting a snack to delay his/her bedtime? Many snacks after dinner are high in sugar or carbohydrates that convert to sugar thus giving your child a sugar rush. If your child insists or is accustom to an after dinner snack, try foods that are loaded with tryptophan. Tryptophan is an amino acid that makes the body feels lethargic. Tryptophan is in nuts, eggs, cereal, seeds, peanut butter, pumpkin and even milk. So when your mother gave you a warm glass of milk before bed her intention was to get you asleep fast.

Drink: Most children like to have a drink before bed, but any drink that has caffeine is a no-no. Caffeine is not healthy any time of day as it releases sugar that is stored in the liver causing the child to crave more sugar to replace it. Caffeine stimulates the body and this is exactly the opposite of what should be happening if you plan on getting your child to sleep. My suggestion is to never

let a child drink soda, above all after dinner. Do not even get me started on the side effects of aspartame. According to Diana Dow-Edwards, PhD research scientist, SUNY Health Science Center, Brooklyn, NY. "Children raised on chemical diets are more likely to develop physical and mental disorders and the evidence is surfacing at epidemic levels in America and other developed countries using sugar-free products."

For children over one year, try water or milk. Not only is water calorie-free, but drinking it teaches kids to accept a low-flavor, no-sugar beverage as a thirst-quencher. A cup of milk has 300 milligrams of calcium; it can be a big contributor to your child's daily needs. Toddlers (ages 1 to 2 years): 500 milligrams of calcium daily.

Routine: What do you do to get your child ready for bed? How long do you give them to relax and settle down before putting them to bed? Do you have a routine you follow every night? Do you try to adhere to a time schedule for bedtime? Children and adults have a hard time unwinding from the day that is why everyone needs to establish a sleep routine such as; reading a book, having a warm bath or listening to a lullaby or sleep music. Add aromatherapy to the mix, lavender oil is known to calm the nerves and can be added in a bath or lotion. There are also toy animals that have lavender stuffing. Add lavender to a room mister or sprinkle some essential oil on the child's pillow at night. If you don't like lavender, peppermint also has calming properties.

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Establishing a routine will help you and the child avoid bedtime stress. The child will never question what is about to happen because they know and are more comfortable and relaxed with a routine. Having a calmer child before putting them to bed will help him/her get to sleep faster. Sleep is essential for your child's emotional and physical development. Find a sleep routine that works for your child will ensure they are getting enough sleep during the night and waking well-rested ready to play during the day.

Note: Whatever bedtime routine you establish with your child, the child will connect with falling asleep such as being rocked, fed or read etc. This is what is known as a sleep-onset association. When or if they wake up during the night, your child will need the same thing to fall back asleep. If you want your child to fall back to sleep on their own, then you need to encourage a sleep-onset association that doesn't involve you. If you are still bottle feeding your child, you can do so to make them sleepy, but stop before they fall asleep. Put your child in bed awake, so they will learn to go to sleep when you are not there. It is not recommended to let an infant or a child under 1 year old use the "cry it out" approach to put themselves to sleep. If your child cries for more than 10-15 minutes, because this is the usual time for them to fall asleep, go in and comfort them. Leave, wait another 10-15 minutes and do this until they fall asleep. Try to alternate parents so the child doesn't associate one parent for the after nite-nite routine.

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